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# WEST VIRGINIA LAW QUARTERLY

And THE BAR

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## WILLIAM P. WILLEY — AN APPRECIATION

By B. M. AMBLER<sup>1</sup>

**W**HEREAS, The members of the State Bar Association now attending this meeting, have greatly missed the presence of William P. Willey, our first Secretary and early President, whose loyal and efficient labors and loving care have, in many capacities, contributed more than that of any other person to the upbuilding, development, and usefulness of this organization, and we especially regret to learn that his absence is caused by ill health; we recognize and record our obligations to him for his work; and we trust that we may in future assemblies enjoy his genial companionship, his wise counsel and good example, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the Secretary communicate to Mr. Willey the greetings of this Association and the sentiments here expressed.

The foregoing resolution of The West Virginia Bar Association adopted on July 5, 1917, at the White Sulphur Springs meeting and prompted by the retirement of Professor Willey at his own request from the editorship of **THE BAR** after twenty-four years of most useful, distinguished, and self-sacrificing service in that capacity, will find most cordial echo in the hearts of hundreds of members of the legal profession both within and without the membership of the Bar Association.

Professor Willey was graduated from Dickinson College in 1862 and was admitted to the bar of Monongalia County in 1864. In

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<sup>1</sup> Of the Parkersburg bar.

1883 he resigned his position as editor of *The Wheeling Register*, which he had held since 1878, to become Professor of Equity Jurisprudence and History in West Virginia University. In 1892, with the growth of the law school, he gave up his duties in teaching history and thereafter devoted his entire time to instruction in law until his retirement from active teaching service in 1912 when he was made Professor of Law, Emeritus, at the end of twenty-nine years of devoted service to the University and the State. During a very large part of this time he was also Secretary of the University faculty and of the Board of Regents. During his teaching days, Professor Willey also published a book on Procedure at Law and Equity.

But Professor Willey was more than a University teacher and administrative officer. He made the whole state his campus. His services to the state outside of his class room are no less distinguished than his services to the University. He was one of the fifty-seven members of the legal profession who founded *The West Virginia Bar Association* at a meeting held in Grafton on July 8, 1886, and was elected secretary of the Association at that meeting. In every sense he may be called a founder of *The West Virginia Bar Association*. He has also been its preserver. He performed efficiently the arduous duties of secretary of the Association during its formative period from 1886 to 1890 and was elected president of the Association in 1891. He was a member of the Executive Council from 1892 to 1917, and during a large part of this time was its chairman. In this capacity he was a most efficient officer and servant of the Association. He was always in attendance at the meetings of the Council whether others could be there or not. But it was as the founder of *THE BAR* in 1894 and its editor until 1917 that he made his influence most felt. The twenty-four bound volumes of *THE BAR*, over two hundred and fifty numbers, represent an untold labor of love, done practically without compensation for the good of the legal profession of West Virginia. The service thus rendered especially in the early years of the Association's existence cannot be valued. His legal scholarship, kindly character, good-fellowship, fine example and untiring work tided the Association over many a shoal, and did more than can ever be measured in making it a real force in the affairs of the state.

During the twenty-nine years from 1883 to 1912, when Professor Willey was a professor of law in West Virginia University, he was

*WILLIAM P. WILLEY*

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a moulding force for untold good on the minds and characters of several hundred young men who studied under his guidance; many of them are now leaders of the profession. His classes are represented at nearly every West Virginia county-seat, and many of his students have gone far beyond the bounds of the State. To them he gave inspiration for high ideals in scholarship and in professional efficiency and conduct. As a teacher of law he brought into touch with the University and with each other a very large number of lawyers of the state who otherwise would have been strangers. In his triple capacity as editor of *THE BAR*, as leader in the work of the Bar Association, and as professor of law in the University, he worthily followed his illustrious father as a maker for good in the history of the state. Simple in his tastes, kind and cordial in his manner, sincere and upright in character, steadfast in duty, and untiring in his labors, Professor Willey has been a worthy model as man, lawyer and educator. He may grow old in years, but never in the affection of those who sat under his instruction and of his brothers in professional life and in University work. He has received many honors and all of them have been deserved. His multitude of friends wish him health and happiness in the years that are before him.